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Abraham Lincoln's Cabinet

William Fessenden

Excerpts from newspapers and other
sources

From the files of the
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

Retirement of Secretary Fessenden.

Mar 3, 1865 WASHINGTON, March 2.

The Chiefs of the various Bureaus of the Treasury Department, proceeded to the room of Secretary Fessenden, when Judge Nathan Sargent, the Commissioner of Customs, in his own and their behalf, delivered a brief address, expressive of their respect of him on the eve of his retiring from the Treasury Department, and expressing their cordial wishes for his health and happiness. Secretary Fessenden replied as follows:—

GENTLEMEN—I am exceedingly thankful to you for this call, and for the kind expressions of regard I have received from you through the Commissioner of Customs. I can only say to you what you all knew—that I came here most unwillingly. I shall have perhaps but a single regret in leaving the Department, and that arises from the necessity of parting from so many gentlemen with whom my intercourse ~~has been so agreeable~~, and for whom I have a friendly regard. I came here because I conceived it to be my duty under the circumstances, but encouraged and sustained by assurances of respect from gentlemen connected with the office. I have received that respect from all of you, without a single exception. I found every gentleman here disposed to aid me.

I can say to you with entire frankness, that I believe my having been here will prove of very great benefit to myself from the information and experience I have acquired, and I trust I have not been disadvantageous to others or to the Department. I think it would be better for the Government and the country if Congress and the gentlemen connected with the executive branch of the Government better understood each other. I shall go back to the Senate with many opinions corrected and improved with regard to the conduct of the Department, and principally that with which I have been connected. I think I shall be disposed to render justice to the gentlemen who are placed in a situation like yours, labor in season and out of season for the public good, for what is considered in peace times to be a very inadequate return for their services. I have no doubt the same is true in regard to all the other departments of the Government. I can only say in my opinion, however we may be placed, either in the department or elsewhere, no man in this country is above the rank of gentleman, and every man who can, and does sincerely perform his duty, is entitled to be treated as such. Acting upon this belief, I have regarded the humblest clerk who conscientiously performs his duty, as entitled to be treated as such.

Gentlemen, as you came here neither to make or hear speeches, I will merely return you kind wishes, and shall indulge in the hope that in leaving the department I shall not lose the regard of those whose friendship I have learned to prize.

LINCOLN LORE

Bulletin of the Lincoln National Life Foundation - - - - Dr. Louis A. Warren, Editor
Published each week by The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana

Number 973

FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

December 1, 1947

WILLIAM PITT FESSENDEN, SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY

William Pitt Fessenden, usually addressed by his friends as "Pitt," visited Springfield, Illinois on June 19, 1837, in company with Daniel Webster and his party. A largely attended barbecue was prepared by the Whigs of central Illinois at Porter's Grove in honor of the illustrious Webster. Inasmuch as Abraham Lincoln was living in Springfield at this time and an influential Whig member of the Legislature, there can be no doubt but what it was here that he first met Mr. Fessenden. In fact it would appear as if this future Secretary of the Treasury was presented to Abraham Lincoln earlier than any other member who was later taken into his cabinet.

There is no evidence that Fessenden remembered meeting Lincoln at Springfield and possibly Lincoln may not have had any distinct memory of meeting Fessenden because of the greater importance of Webster. It was an eventful trip for Fessenden. After the visit to Clay in Kentucky, the Webster party stopped at Cincinnati and here Fessenden made the acquaintance of a young man named Salmon P. Chase, whom he was to succeed twenty-seven years later in the Lincoln cabinet.

Fessenden was a member of an influential New England family, his father, Samuel, having been very early affiliated with the anti-slavery party in Maine and for forty years the head of the bar in that state. William became an ardent follower of his father with reference to the slavery question and as early as 1840 sponsored anti-slavery legislature as a member of Congress and became one of the leading Whigs opposed to "property in men." As a senator in 1854 he made a speech on the Kansas-Nebraska bill which was widely acclaimed.

As early as 1854 Fessenden was advocating and helping to promote what he termed an "anti-extension party" but with the formation of the Republican group he became an ardent supporter of its principles. The newly organized party in Maine sent him to

the Senate in 1859. He would have been a favorite son candidate for the Presidency in 1860 if he had allowed his name to be presented by the delegation from his state. Regardless of his unwillingness to become a candidate, James G. Blain wrote to him from Chicago on Monday, May 16, 1860, during the Republican convention a letter containing this advice, "The game lies between Lincoln and

WILLIAM PITT FESSENDEN

Born in Boscawen, N. H., Oct. 16, 1806

Graduated from Bowdoin, 1823

Admitted to the bar at 21 years of age
Practiced law successfully at Bridgetown, Bangor, and Portland, Maine

Sent to the Maine Legislature, 1832 and 1840

Elected a Whig congressman, 1840

Served in Maine Legislature, 1845-1846, 1853-1854

Sent to Senate by coalition of Whigs and anti-slavery Democrats, 1854

Assisted in formation of Republican Party

Re-elected to Senate, 1859

Member of Peace Congress, 1861

Chairman of the finance committee, War Congress

Appointed Secretary of the Treasury, July 1, 1864

Resigned Secretaryship to take seat in the Senate, March 3, 1865

yourself." On the following day Fessenden wrote a letter to his family, "Lincoln seems to be in the ascendant." Dennison was another possible nominee for the presidency in 1860 who eventually found his way into the successful candidate's cabinet.

As soon as Lincoln was elected Fessenden became a strong advocate for the appointment of Chase as head of the Treasury department which he felt to be the most important post in view of the possibility of a war. Senator Fessenden himself was chairman of the committee on Finance. On

May 29, 1861, he received at his home in Maine a note from Chase stating that the President desired his presence in Washington and from then on Fessenden was more responsible than any one else for the measures passed in Congress which gave congressional financial support to the war enterprise.

One of the most drastic movements in the early part of the war came when a committee from the Senate attempted to force Lincoln to reorganize his cabinet for the primary purpose of getting rid of Seward. Fessenden took a leading part in the procedure and in the meetings with the President which followed was very outspoken in his criticisms: so much so that when his name was proposed as a successor to Seward he remarked, "You know very well that the part I have taken in this movement would effectually exclude me from a cabinet appointment if there were no other reason."

However the time came when Mr. Fessenden learned that Mr. Lincoln would not allow personal differences to stand between him and an appointment that should be made for the good of the nation. Upon Mr. Chase's withdrawal from the cabinet Mr. Fessenden was almost commanded by the President to accept the portfolio. This he consented to do purely from the sense of duty and on no desire of his own. There was also an understanding that just as soon as the emergency was over he would be relieved and with this promise from the Chief Executive he was appointed.

The very efficient service Mr. Fessenden rendered the country at the time of one of its most difficult financial crises was much appreciated by Mr. Lincoln and for eight months Fessenden directed the affairs of the department acceptably. With the senatorial elections coming up and some movement taking form in Maine to nominate another for Fessenden's former seat in the Senate, his resignation to take effect on March 3, 1865 was handed to the President.

Beverly Garland hopes for time away from 'Scarecrow' kitchen

By JERRY BUCK
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Beverly Garland hopes she can get out of the kitchen in the new season of CBS' "Scarecrow and Mrs. King."

As Dotty West, the mother of Amanda King (Kate Jackson), she spends most of her time cooking, while Amanda spends most of her time cooking up something exciting. The show airs at 7 p.m. on Mondays.

"I seem to be confined to the home," said Garland. "Isn't it awful? . . . I think this year they're trying a little harder to develop my character. Maybe the mother will emerge as a little more rounded than what we've seen before."

"It's hard on an hour show to get all the elements in and build the various characters and still have the mystery and excitement. We've got a story to tell in one hour, so it's not like 'Dynasty' with a continuing story."

Not only is Garland confined to the kitchen, but she has no idea what's going on between Amanda and Lee Stetson (Bruce Boxleitner). She wonders if they're lovers. She is blissfully unaware of the truth — that her daughter is a secret government spy who works with Stetson, also known as the Scarecrow, and is always in some dangerous scrape.

Although, in a domestic role here, Garland was television's first female police officer in a syndicated series in the 1950s called "Decoy."

"I'm blessed. I'm working," Garland said. "I'm very busy. I own two hotels. I've got a husband and four children. My life is very full. I've been in this business a long time, and I'm a survivor. Naturally, I'd love to have my own series, but that's not the way it is, and I understand that."

She is married to Fillmore Crank, a real estate developer and businessman.

"A few years back Fillmore bought seven acres in North Hollywood from Gene Autry, who was going to build a television station on it," she said. "We borrowed \$100,000 from a bank and built a hotel. It was Fillmore's idea to build the hotel. He said we'll get a manager and go to Europe and collect our coupons. It hasn't worked out that way. It takes a lot of work and a lot of attention."

Her stepson, Fillmore Crank Jr., runs another family hotel in Sacramento. "I think when we opened we had one guest," she said. "I think it was my mother. It was a long, hard road to get it going."

Her stepson is married to former actress Tina Cole,



AP LASERPHOTO

Beverly Garland

who played Garland's stepdaughter-in-law on "My Three Sons." She is now her stepdaughter-in-law in real life.

Garland, who grew up in Glendale, Calif., and Phoenix, Ariz., is the great-great-granddaughter of William Pitt Fessenden, secretary of the treasury under President Abraham Lincoln. Fessenden is her real name.

"I was born during an earthquake," she said. "Plaster fell down on me in the hospital. My mother told them they'd given her the wrong baby. I was supposed to be a boy. She finally had to accept me because there were no boys born that morning."

She made her movie debut in "D.O.A." in 1950. Her first TV appearance came as a regular on "Mama Rosa" in 1950. At that time she used the name Beverly Campbell. She also starred as Bing Crosby's wife in his short-lived "The Bing Crosby Show" during the 1964-65 season.

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